

# Journal of Applied Christian Leadership

---

Volume 7 | Number 2

Article 11

---

2013

## The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business [review] / Duhigg, Charles

Bill Miller

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/jacl>



Part of the [Leadership Studies Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Miller, Bill (2013) "The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business [review] / Duhigg, Charles," *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership*: Vol. 7: No. 2, 107-108.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/jacl/vol7/iss2/11>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ Andrews University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of Applied Christian Leadership by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ Andrews University. For more information, please contact [repository@andrews.edu](mailto:repository@andrews.edu).

writes that “Westerners value boldness and verbal skill, traits that promote individuality, while Asians prize quiet, humility, and sensitivity, which foster group cohesion” (p. 189).

In writing *Quiet*, Cain gives voices to a segment of society that is often misunderstood and silenced. Her relevant arguments, supported by well-researched facts and anecdotal evidence, provide fresh insights for Christian communities which may be influenced by the “extrovert ideal.” Moreover, parents and educators, as well as those who are introverts, extroverts or ambiverts, can learn how to appreciate the strengths of various personality traits. I recommend this book to any leader, parent or educator who wishes to have a balanced perspective of the strengths and potential of introverts.

PASTOR M. CURTIS POWELL is a student in the Doctor of Ministry program at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary and is pastor of the Lighthouse Seventh-day Adventist Church in Miami, Florida.

## THE POWER OF HABIT: WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO IN LIFE AND BUSINESS

*By Charles Duhigg*  
*New York, NY: Random House (2012)*  
*Kindle, 371 pages*

*Reviewed by BILL MILLER*

Through the use of storytelling, academic studies, and interviews, Mr. Duhigg, a reporter for *The New York Times*, entered the world of habits, the impact of habits, the power of habits, and what it takes to change the habits that encase our lives and culture.

Duhigg considered the routine of habits from three large frameworks: (1) how habits emerge within individ-

ual lives, (2) habits of successful companies and organizations, and (3) the habits of societies. Within the context of each chapter, he attempted to work from a central argument: “Habits can be changed, if we understand how they work” (pp. 1, 2).

Whether you are a pastor, an administrator, an academic, or a layperson, life as we know it is a conglomeration of decisions, habits, and addictions. This process tends to be done somewhat mindlessly until we recognize that maybe the direction we are going needs to change (i.e., our devotional life, use of money, family time, diet, exercise, leadership model, organizational culture).

Mr. Duhigg provided a method of changing a habit. One must establish a “keystone habit” which involves “identifying a few key priorities and fashioning them into powerful levers” (p. 101). These priorities will help when willpower is weak. He suggested that if one could understand the cues that have established the sequence of a present habit, and then begin to establish a different sequence of “cravings” or “addictions” toward a desired outcome, the ability to create a new habit comes more easily.

The brain must cope with a voluminous amount of input every moment of every day. Habits form so that the brain can work on multiple stimuli simultaneously. But when a different outcome is desired, new habits must be formed. Understanding the “habit loop” becomes critical: “cue, routine, reward; cue, routine, reward” (p. 19). A habit loop establishes belief—belief that change can take place. “Belief seems crucial” to creating a craving for a new habit (p. 85).

*The Power of Habit*, however, neglects to address the breadth of literature on addictions versus habits, historical literature on habit formation

and change, or a biblical perspective of habits. The author also used a shallow definition of “habits” and “addictions” (sometimes interchangeably), which seemed to lead more to opinion than fact.

It is important for any human to have an understanding of habits, how they are formed, the impact they have, and how to change unwanted or destructive habits. Duhigg underscores this by pointing out that a Duke University researcher found “that more than 40 percent of the actions people performed each day weren’t actual decisions, but habits” (p. 2). Can habits be changed? Yes. However, Duhigg’s remedies are not the “cure-all” for changing negative habits and addictions or creating positive ones.

Despite my reservations, I recommend this book for those looking to better understand the role of habit formation and the impact of habits on our lives and organizations.

PASTOR BILL MILLER is a Doctor of Ministry student at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary and serves as the President of the Potomac Conference of Seventh-day Adventist.

## **TO SELL IS HUMAN: THE SURPRISING TRUTH ABOUT MOVING OTHERS**

*By Daniel H. Pink*  
*New York, NY: Penguin Group (2012)*  
*Hardcover, 260 pages*

*Reviewed by WILLIAM R. AUXIER*

I heard Dan Pink speak at the Leadership program Roundtable Conference at Andrews University in July 2006. His presentation, based on his book *A Whole New Mind*, was entertaining and informative. His communication style was sincere and effective, and he made us think. A

*Whole New Mind* should be on every leader’s reading list. For that reason, I was eager to read *To Sell Is Human: The Surprising Truth About Moving Others*.

Lead. To lead is to move others. Leadership is the process of influencing or moving others. That is what *To Sell Is Human* is all about—moving others. Dan Pink makes the case that moving others is part of being human: we all sell. The book provides an overview of the knowledge base along with tips on how to be more effective at moving others. For example, the first sentence of this paragraph contains one word, a utilization of what Pink calls the one word pitch.

Effectively moving others requires multiple communication tools. Would you like to add some new tools to your toolbox? Dan Pink provides an opportunity to do so. He cites numerous studies alongside real world examples followed by how-to instruction. The question in the second sentence of this paragraph is what Pink calls the question pitch.

Moving others is the focus of this book by Dan Pink, a skill that if lacking, makes leadership stink! Notice the rhyme in the previous sentence? Rhymes enhance a hearer’s ability to process information and make sense of it. This is an example of a rhyming pitch.

Pink tackles the topic of selling or moving others (synonymous terms) with determination and hard work. He successfully makes the case that selling is not exclusive to salespersons. *To Sell Is Human* begins by building the foundation of this premise with an historical examination of the sales profession. He concludes that “most of what we think we understand about selling is constructed atop a foundation of assumptions that has crumbled” (pp. 2-3). Pink states that in effect we are all salespersons; we all